

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
2138 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6216
(202) 225-3951
judiciary.house.gov

December 6, 2022

The Honorable Steven Dettelbach
Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Washington, DC 20226

Dear Director Dettelbach:

Yesterday, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) notified us that it intends to destroy the firearms associated with the botched Operation Fast and Furious. I strongly urge you to reconsider this decision and request that you preserve this evidence.

In Operation Fast and Furious, ATF agents under the Obama-Biden Administration allowed federal firearms licensees to sell firearms to known or suspected straw purchasers.¹ These decisions had deadly consequences. Two firearms that were allowed to “walk” during Operation Fast and Furious were found at the crime scene where U.S. Border Patrol agent Brian Terry was murdered.² Numerous other firearms were found at crime scenes on both sides of the southern border.³

Although the ATF apparently intends to forget its dangerous misconduct in Operation Fast and Furious, the scandal is still a matter of public concern. In fact, earlier this year, prosecutors in Mexico charged seven individuals with crimes related to Operation Fast and Furious, including Mexico’s former top police official and a former Mexican Federal Police commander.⁴ Given the potential for ongoing criminal and possible civil actions, it is not in the interest of justice for the ATF to destroy potential evidence associated with Operation Fast and Furious. I request that you immediately take steps to preserve all evidence associated with Operation Fast and Furious and confirm in writing that you have done so.

¹ Richard Serrano, *Emails show top Justice Department officials knew of ATF gun program*, LA TIMES, Oct. 3, 2011.

² Sari Horwitz, *A gunrunning sting gone fatally wrong*. WASH. POST, Jul. 27, 2011.

³ *A Review of ATF's Operation Fast and Furious and Related Matters*. U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, Nov. 2012.

⁴ *Mexico charges 7 in 'Fast and Furious' weapons trafficking*, AP, Jan. 9, 2022.

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Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jim Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Jordan" clearly legible.

Jim Jordan
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler
Chairman